

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5, 7-14, 16-23 and 25-27 are presently pending in this application. Claims 6, 15 and 24 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and Claims 1, 10, 11, 19 and 20 are amended by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 10 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Iida et al. (U.S. Patent 6,473,091, herein "Iida"); Claims 2-5, 11-14 and 20-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Iida in view of Levison (U.S. Patent 6,008,815); Claims 7-9, 16-18 and 25-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Iida in view of Weed (U.S. Patent 6,809,740); and Claims 6, 15 and 24 were objected to as dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form.

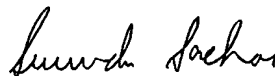
Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the early indication of allowable subject matter in Claims 6, 15 and 24. In view of that indication, and of the explanation of allowable subject matter noted at the paragraph bridging page 8 and page 9 of the outstanding Action, independent Claims 1, 10 and 19 are amended to include the allowable subject matter of Claims 6, 15 and 24, respectively. Further, Claims 11 and 20, and the section under SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION, are amended for clarification. No new matter is added.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the outstanding rejections summarized above are rendered moot, and that independent Claims 1, 10 and 19, and the claims depending therefrom, should be allowed.

As no other issues are pending in this application, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and it is hereby respectfully requested that this case be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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